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General Assembly
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Security Council
Sixty-first year

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Sport for peace and development

Sustainable development

Operational activities for development

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Crime prevention and criminal justice

International drug control

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

06-24636 (E) 030306 030306

Letter dated 15 February 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the final communiqué and the Abu Dhabi Declaration adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-sixth session, held in Abu Dhabi on 18 and 19 December 2005, under the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Abu Dhabi (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 14, 15, 24, 31, 38, 48, 52, 57, 61, 62, 94, 100, 106, 107 and 108, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Al-Otaiba**
First Secretary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex to the letter dated 15 February 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

The Abu Dhabi Declaration issued by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-sixth session

With guidance from our Islamic religion, basing ourselves on the lofty purposes, principles and aims of the Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council and on the common ties between the peoples it represents, and having regard for the important phase of political, economic, social, and cultural changes through which our Gulf Arab region is passing.

And pursuant to the statements and resolutions issued by the Supreme Council at its previous sessions, the Council, at its twenty-sixth session, held in the city of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates on 16 and 17 Dhu'lqa'dah A H 1426, corresponding to 18 and 19 December 2005, reviewed all issues and subjects of concern to the member States of the Council and their peoples.

The Supreme Council affirms the importance of the human role in development as stated by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (may God rest his soul): "Man is the basic component of all progress; the dearest fruit of this land is human beings, whom we must care for deeply and whose welfare we must safeguard."

The GCC States attach special importance to the human being as the pillar of society, in keeping with their complete faith in the importance of deepening our lofty values and supporting Islamic, Arab and national unity.

The Supreme Council commends the efforts of member States to update and revise educational curricula, and stresses the importance of laying out a broad strategy for secondary, higher, professional and technical education to ensure that education is geared towards national goals and recent developments in the region.

In conjunction with the launching of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) to promote education as the basis of a more sustainable human society, the Council is aware that global challenges require that education systems undergo fundamental development in order to keep pace with the rapidly growing informational and technological challenges posed by the information revolution and in order to achieve the desired progress.

The Supreme Council is of the view that the development of national human resources in the education sector must be considered one of the key elements in moving education forward and creating an enlightened generation that stays true to its human and cultural values, traditions and heritage, while at the same time being capable of adapting to contemporary developments.

The Supreme Council encourages greater research, development, science and technology, and support for efforts to enhance and develop both public and private scientific and technological institutions, including scientific cooperation and information exchanges.

The Supreme Council calls for the implementation of strategies and development plans and for the development of scientific education, training and future planning for all individuals in society, for particular care to be devoted to women, youth, children, those with special needs, and the family, and for efforts to meet all contemporary social challenges.

The GCC States believe that their Islamic faith is a religion of moderation that attaches special importance to the role of knowledge in deepening awareness and developing society, based on the foundations of mutual respect, tolerance, moderation, and the enhancement of dialogue free from any radicalism or extremism.

Issued at Abu Dhabi
Monday, 17 Dhu'lqa'dah A H 1426, corresponding to 19 December 2005

Closing statement of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-sixth session

Abu Dhabi — the United Arab Emirates

16 and 17 Dhu'lqa'dah A H 1426, corresponding to 18 and 19 December 2005

"The King Fahd Summit"

In response to the gracious invitation of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, the Supreme Council held its twenty-sixth session in the city of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, on Sunday 16 and Monday 17 Dhu'lqa'dah A H 1426, corresponding to 18 and 19 December 2005, under the Chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, and with the attendance of:

His Majesty King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain;

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman;

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar;

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also took part in the meeting.

The Supreme Council stated that, on the anniversary of the blessed establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council 25 years ago in the city of Abu Dhabi, under the patronage of the wise and dear departed leader Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, this fair city, under the reign of an excellent successor to an excellent predecessor, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, once again hosts this esteemed gathering with pride in the great accomplishments of this lofty edifice.

The Council expressed its genuine appreciation for and pride in the founding leaders who came before them and whose memory will live forever in the spirit and lofty goals of this great citadel. May God have mercy on them and bestow upon them the best of rewards for the benevolence, development and construction that they bestowed on their homelands, for their devotion to the security and safety of the GCC and the peoples it represents, and for their service to the just causes of the Arab and Islamic peoples and to regional and global peace. The leaders of the GCC States affirm their continued resolve to move the Council along its blessed path of joint cooperation to realize yet greater achievements in various fields in response to the hopes and aspirations of the citizens of the GCC States.

The Council expressed sadness and pain at the Arab and Islamic peoples' loss of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the late King Fahd Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, along with appreciation for his glorious deeds and great benevolence that strengthened the Council and supported the aspirations of its peoples, and for the

role of the departed, may God have mercy upon him, in the service of Arab and Islamic causes and the family of nations.

The Supreme Council welcomed the new Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, may God preserve him, who is the living embodiment of the continuation of a legacy of development, benevolence, strength and progress for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its dear people, as well as of the continued strength of GCC and the continued achievement, along with his brother leaders of the GCC States, of its lofty goals, the preservation of its security, the reaffirmation of its principles and the achievement of stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

The Supreme Council welcomed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's membership in the World Trade Organization, stressing that this would be a great support to the Council and an important factor in global economic stability.

The Supreme Council applauded the outcome of the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit, held in Mecca on 5 and 6 Dhu'lqa'dah A H 1426, and both the Mecca Declaration and the final communiqué issued at the close of the Summit, which covered all subjects relating to the well-being and progress of the Islamic member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

The Supreme Council expressed its appreciation for the efforts made by the State of Qatar under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, during his Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China. It expressed its satisfaction with the outcome of the Second South Summit, held in Doha in June 2005.

The Council reviewed the achievements of its member States in development and modernization and in the economic, political, educational and social spheres, recalling and affirming the "Manama Declaration", issued at the "Zayed Summit" held last year in the Kingdom of Bahrain, regarding the importance of pursuing the process of comprehensive modernization to keep abreast of the times and its basic demands, while taking care to proceed gradually in reaping the fruits of such development and modernization and to let it well up from the depths of the national being and from the heritage and history of the GCC countries and their peoples.

The Supreme Council reviewed the accomplishments achieved through joint action in a number of areas since the previous session and made a comprehensive evaluation of regional and international political and security issues and events, in light of the alarming incidents and rapid developments being witnessed in the region and the world.

Noting the desire of the leaders of the GCC States to enhance and broaden their cooperation, the Supreme Council reviewed follow-up reports and recommendations submitted by the Ministerial Council, and took the following decisions:

The Council reviewed the progress made by GCC in the economic sphere based on the reports and recommendations submitted by the relevant ministerial committees and by the Secretariat.

The Supreme Council endorsed the document on a uniform trade policy for GCC States that aims to unify the external trade policy of GCC States and to treat the outside world as a single economic unit, while adopting a uniform internal trade

policy to facilitate the movement of people, goods, services and transport, and which takes into consideration environmental and consumer protection.

It also reviewed the positive impact of the customs union in increasing commercial exchanges and the movement of goods among GCC States. It approved an extension of the custom union's transitional period through the end of 2007, and agreed to exempt a number of commodities from customs duties.

The Council reviewed the progress made by member States in 2005 in implementing the plan for a GCC common market, particularly in the area of the buying and trading of shares. The Council endorsed the agreement by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, acting on its authority, to extend the scope of economic activities open to GCC nationals to include ownership of employment agencies, car rentals and most cultural activities.

The Council instructed the relevant committees to complete all the necessary formalities for the Gulf Common Market to be established by the end of 2007.

With regard to the timetable for the establishment of the GCC Monetary Union, the Supreme Council reviewed the Secretariat's report on steps taken in this area and approved the financial and monetary criteria for economic convergence agreed on by the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and the Committee of Governors of Monetary Agencies and Central Banks. It instructed the two Committees to undertake a study of how these criteria and their percentages were arrived at and submit it to the next session of the Supreme Council.

The Council reviewed a number of other economic reports submitted by the Secretariat and issued instructions regarding them. They included reports on the interconnection of water systems among GCC States, the economic feasibility of a railway network connecting GCC countries, and the status of implementation of the "smart card" project in each of the GCC States.

The Supreme Council reviewed reports on standard precautionary measures taken by GCC countries to counter the threat of avian influenza and on the results of the joint emergency meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture and Health of GCC States on this subject. It issued instructions to the relevant ministerial committees to intensify and coordinate efforts to prevent the transmission and spread of this disease.

The Council also reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken to strengthen cooperation between GCC countries and the Republic of Yemen in this regard. These measures included earlier directives by the Supreme Council to contribute to funding for development projects in Yemen and to organize a conference to explore investment opportunities in the Republic of Yemen.

The Supreme Council reviewed developments in the economic relations between GCC States and other States and international groups during 2005, including framework agreements on economic cooperation and on free trade negotiations between GCC and the European Union. It welcomed the progress made during the latest round of negotiations between the two parties and expressed the hope that the negotiations would culminate in the signing of a free trade agreement in the near future. The Council also expressed its satisfaction with the progress in negotiations for the establishment of free trade zones between GCC and the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Turkey.

The Supreme Council discussed a number of human, health and environmental issues. Given the desire of the GCC States to protect the health of humans and their environment from the dangers of exposure to ultraviolet radiation as a result of the depletion of the ozone layer, and consistent with international efforts within the framework of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Supreme Council approved uniform GCC guidelines for the control of substances that deplete the ozone layer.

The Supreme Council reviewed the Secretary-General's special report on education and referred it to the Ministerial Council for implementation of its proposals. The Council also commended the efforts being made by the Ministers of Education to implement its decisions and directed the Committee of Ministers of Higher Education to expedite the implementation of joint programmes and projects in higher education, including those contained in the document on comprehensive development of the education sector, taking into account the opinions and observations of the GCC States.

With regard to the efforts being made to provide social insurance for public and private-sector workers who are nationals of GCC countries, the Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction with the preparatory measures taken by member States, task forces and the relevant ministerial committees to implement the decision taken at its twenty-fifth session, held in Manama in December 2004, regarding the extension of the insurance scheme to nationals of GCC States employed in GCC States other than their own.

The Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction with the steps being taken by member States to improve the situation of families and children and with the efforts being made to increase the participation of women in development efforts.

In the area of youth and sports, the Supreme Council praised the efforts being made by the Ministers of Youth and Sports, the Chairmen of Olympic Committees, and the technical committees to raise the level of sports in GCC countries and to promote youth and sports activities.

With regard to cooperation in the legal field, the Supreme Council approved the revised version of the Riyadh document on a uniform code of criminal procedure to serve as a guideline for GCC States for the next four years. The Council also extended the validity of the Kuwait document on a uniform civil code for GCC States, the Doha document on a uniform penal code, the Abu Dhabi document on a uniform juvenile code, the Manama document on a uniform code of legal representation, and the Muscat document on a uniform code of evidence to serve as guidelines for the next four years. It also extended the validity of the Manama document on a uniform code of civil appeals procedure to serve as a guideline pending its revision and adoption in final form.

In the military sphere, the Supreme Council reviewed the results of the fourth meeting of the Joint Defence Council, held in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 22 Sha'ban AH 1426, corresponding to 26 September 2005. It ratified the resolutions of the Joint Defence Council and hailed the progress achieved in this area.

(The Council also reviewed the letter from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, regarding the development of the

Al-Jazeera (Peninsula) Shield force. The Council endorsed the King's proposals and referred them to the Joint Defence Council for further study and for recommendations to be submitted to the next session of the Supreme Council.)

In the area of security coordination and cooperation, the Supreme Council reviewed the results and decisions of the 24th meeting of Ministers of the Interior, held in Manama in November 2005. The Council expressed satisfaction with coordination and security cooperation among member States and with the positive steps taken in this area to protect GCC States from dangerous security threats, such as the spread of drugs, money-laundering, and the smuggling of arms and explosives, as well as with the development of techniques to combat infiltration and of secure means of communication and information exchange among the various security agencies of member States.

The Supreme Council endorsed the agreement reached by the Ministers of the Interior on the transportation of persons convicted of crimes punishable by deprivation of liberty between member States and authorized them to sign it, owing to the significance of its humanitarian aspects.

In view of the rapid developments in the world today in the field of security as a result of terrorist acts, the Supreme Council reviewed the efforts and mechanisms of GCC States to combat terrorism at the regional and international levels, and expressed its satisfaction with them. It reaffirmed the firm position of GCC States on combating and rejecting terrorism in all its forms, from whatever source, and on whatever specious pretexts. The Supreme Council reiterated its appeals and support for all regional and international efforts to combat terrorism through the clarification and coordination of positions on a definition of terrorism, distinguishing it from the legitimate right of peoples to oppose occupation without the spilling of innocent blood.

In this context, the Supreme Council welcomed the outcome of the International Counter-Terrorism Conference hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh in February 2005 and the recommendations it made, in particular the proposal by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, for the establishment of an international counter-terrorism centre, which would doubtless make a vital and active contribution to international counter-terrorism efforts. The Council therefore supports the establishment of a task force under United Nations auspices to study the recommendations concerning the proposed centre.

The Council also reiterated its condemnation of terrorist acts and the resulting death of innocent people and destruction of property. It stressed the importance of confronting these terrorist acts collectively and internationally.

Regarding the work of its Advisory Board, the Supreme Council reviewed and approved the Board's views on terrorism and referred them to the relevant ministerial committees for the establishment of the necessary implementing mechanisms. Regarding the Board's evaluation of the work of GCC over the past 23 years, the Supreme Council, desiring to benefit from them in a way that serves the purposes of joint cooperation, agreed to refer the Board's views to the member States for review and comments by the appropriate parties, after which the Board would be charged with finalizing their views for submission to the Supreme Council at its next session.

The Supreme Council also charged the Advisory Board with examining two subjects during its upcoming session: economic citizenship and its role in deepening Gulf citizenship, and the significance of economic partnerships in supporting the relationships between GCC States and their neighbours.

In the political sphere, the Supreme Council discussed a number of regional, Arab and international issues and articulated the positions of the GCC States on them, including the following:

- Regarding the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, belonging to the United Arab Emirates, the Supreme Council reaffirmed its staunch and established position enunciated in numerous previous declarations that it supports the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and over the territorial waters, airspace, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone of those islands, which constitute an integral part of the United Arab Emirates.

- The Supreme Council expressed its regret over the failure to date of contacts with the Islamic Republic of Iran to achieve any progress that would make an effective contribution to resolving this issue, and thus to security and stability in the region.

- The Supreme Council affirmed that it continues to consider all peaceful means towards the restoration of the right of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, and that the Islamic Republic of Iran should respond to the efforts of the United Arab Emirates and the international community to resolve the issue through direct negotiations or recourse to the International Court of Justice.

With regard to Iraq, the Council welcomed the Iraqi parliamentary elections that took place on 15 December, in which all of the brotherly Iraqi people of all sects and ethnic affiliations participated. The Supreme Council hopes that the election results will open a new page in the history of modern Iraq that will lead to that country's unity, stability, administration of its own affairs, and return to being an effective member of the Arab and world communities living in peace with its neighbours. The Council urged the Iraqi people to continue their dialogue with a view to achieving a comprehensive national reconciliation that will serve as the primary guarantee of Iraqi unity, stability and sovereignty. The Supreme Council affirmed the continued commitment of GCC States to the pledges they have made regarding Iraqi reconstruction.

In keeping with the desire of the leaders of GCC States to see the aspirations of the brotherly Iraqi people for security and stability realized, the Council condemned bombings and terrorist acts targeting civilians, humanitarian and religious institutions and Iraqi infrastructure.

The Council also condemned the deliberate mass killing of Iraqis, Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees, and nationals of other States committed by the former Iraqi regime as well as the flagrant violations of human rights, Islamic and other fundamental moral principles and Arab values that continue to come to light as mass graves are uncovered.

The Council welcomed the ongoing cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq to relieve the suffering undergone by the two countries as a

result of the inhumane practices of the former Iraqi regime, and to resolve outstanding issues such as the return of Kuwaiti property and the Kuwaiti national archives seized by the former Iraqi regime during its occupation of Kuwait and the determination of the fate of Kuwaiti prisoners and nationals of other States.

The Supreme Council reviewed developments on the Palestinian front and in the Middle East peace process and expressed the hope that the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and some settlements in the West Bank, while a step in the right direction, would be followed by steps towards a total withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian lands so as to enable the brotherly Palestinian people to build their independent State on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.

In this regard, the Supreme Council reaffirmed the commitment of GCC States to the Arab peace initiative declared by the 2002 Beirut Summit based on internationally recognized resolutions, and stressed the compatibility of that initiative with the road map.

The Council also reaffirmed that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East would be achieved only through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, supported by the necessary components, with Jerusalem as its capital. The Council also stressed the need for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from the Shaba farmlands in southern Lebanon.

The Supreme Council demanded that Israel desist from its arbitrary practices against defenceless Palestinians, including ending targeted assassinations, stopping settlement activity and evacuating settlements, ceasing construction of the separation wall and removing the sections that have already been built, and preventing threats issued by extremist Jewish groups calling for the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Council stressed that such threats could only inflame Muslim sensibilities, as they related to violations of their holy places, which would destroy the peace process.

The Council demanded that Israel accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and subject all of its nuclear facilities to the international inspections regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and asked the international community to apply pressure on Israel to do so.

The Supreme Council renewed its demand to make the Middle East, including the Gulf region, into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Supreme Council reviewed recent developments in Lebanon and expressed its condemnation of the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in an act of criminal aggression directed against him and his comrades after a life of dedicated service to the security, stability and development of Lebanon. It also condemned the repeated assassination of leaders and symbols of the Lebanese people, stressing the desire of GCC States to support political, security and economic stability for the Lebanese people. The Council called on its brothers in Lebanon to work to mend the rift between them, to preserve the unity and cohesion of Lebanon, and to provide security, stability and well-being for its brotherly people. The Council condemned repeated Israeli threats, violations and attacks on Lebanese sovereignty and independence.

The Council expressed its satisfaction with the Syrian Arab Republic's receptiveness to Security Council resolution 1644 (2005) regarding the International Independent Investigation Commission, emphasizing the concern of GCC States for the sovereignty, independence, unity and security of both Syria and Lebanon.

The Council reviewed developments in the Sudan and welcomed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement reached in Nairobi in January 2005 and the formation of the new Sudanese Government, and applauded the efforts of the Sudanese Government to solve the Darfur problem. The Council expressed its hope that security and peace would reign in all corners of the Sudan and thereby restore well-being to the brotherly Sudanese people.

Finally, the Supreme Council expressed its great appreciation for the sincere efforts made by His Majesty King Hamad bin Issa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and his wise Government during his Chairmanship of the twenty-fifth session of the Supreme Council as well as for his important achievements that expanded the fields and horizons of GCC cooperation, promoting greater progress and well-being for the peoples of the region.

The Supreme Council also expressed its great appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, and to his Government and magnanimous people for the generous hospitality and genuine fraternal sentiments with which leaders of GCC States have been received. The leaders expressed their appreciation for the attention and interest accorded by His Highness to the gathering as well as for his judicious conduct of the proceedings, which had played a major role in achieving important results and decisions. They further expressed the conviction that the United Arab Emirates, in presiding over the work of the session under the leadership of His Highness, would help to promote the GCC process and guide it towards new horizons, taking into account prevailing local, regional and international conditions, so as to realize the aspirations and ambitions of the peoples of the GCC countries.

The Supreme Council looks forward to its twenty-seventh session, scheduled to be held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Dhu'lqa'da AH 1427, corresponding to December 2006, at the kind invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Abu Dhabi

Monday, 17 Dhu'lqa'da AH 1426, corresponding to 19 December 2005

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Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report reflects the initiatives undertaken to implement my recommendations on ways and means in which the Security Council could contribute to dealing with the question of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration. The report covers the period from January to December 2005. The most significant achievement attained during this period is the adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which fulfils my first recommendation. I am also pleased with the recent emphasis placed by the Security Council on the importance of inter-mission cooperation with regard to the prevention of cross-border movement of arms and combatants, the illicit exploitation of natural resources, the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the monitoring of arms embargoes.

06-24604 (E) 240206

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 17 February 2005 (S/PRST/2005/7), in which the Council requested me to update it on the implementation of the recommendations contained in my report of 20 September 2002 on small arms (S/2002/1053). The recommendations were compiled pursuant to the presidential statement of 31 August 2001 (S/PRST/2001/21), by which the Security Council requested me to make specific recommendations on ways and means in which the Council could contribute to dealing with the question of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration, taking into account the views of Member States, recent experiences in the field and the contents of that statement. This report is the third in a series of follow-up reports to my report of 20 September 2002 (for the first two, see S/2003/1217 and Corr.1 and S/2005/69).

2. The present report has been prepared in cooperation with relevant United Nations programmes and agencies and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol).

II. Action taken on the 12 core recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Security Council may wish to call upon Member States to support efforts aimed at developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons.

3. In the statement by its President (S/PRST/2005/7), the Security Council welcomed the efforts by the open-ended working group established by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/241 of 23 December 2003 to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons, and called upon all Member States to support all efforts aimed at this purpose.

4. The working group convened its second and third substantive sessions from 24 January to 4 February 2005 and from 6 to 17 June 2005, respectively. At its third and final session, the working group reached consensus on a draft international instrument of a political character and recommended that the General Assembly adopt it at its sixtieth session. By its decision 60/519 of 8 December 2005, the Assembly unanimously adopted the instrument annexed to the working group's report (A/60/88 and Corr.2). The instrument contains a number of provisions concerning requirements for the marking of small arms and light weapons; record-keeping; and cooperation in the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons.

Recommendation 2

Member States should be called upon to use as required, and to provide technical and financial support to, the Interpol Weapons and Explosives Tracing System.

5. During the period under consideration, Interpol has continued enhancing and refining the Interpol Weapons Electronic Tracing System (IWeTS), whose purpose is to provide Interpol member States with both a search platform and an information-

sharing tool that will facilitate international investigations in relation to the tracing of firearms. The resulting information will be transmitted between member States and Interpol via its new global police communications system called I-24/7, which facilitates fast transmission of important information to member States in a secure manner.

6. Interpol is in the process of launching a pilot programme utilizing the "e-trace" system of the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). This would provide an investigating officer with the capacity to complete the electronic form using the I-24/7 system and send it to ATF via the National Central Bureau of Interpol in the United States. The trace result will in turn be transmitted to the investigating officer, again using the I-24/7 system, via the Interpol Central Bureau in Washington. In order to further enhance the IWeTS system, Interpol is also liaising with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police regarding the possibility of including the Canadian Firearms Reference Table, which is an advanced weapons identification database, in the I-24/7 system.

Recommendation 3

Member States that are in a position to assist the Secretariat in establishing the small arms advisory service, on the basis of extrabudgetary resources, should be encouraged to do so.

7. The Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism, which the small arms advisory service is supposed to assist, has achieved significant progress, especially with respect to the development of essential tools needed to ensure more effective coordination and to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information. It launched an Internet database that would serve as a platform for information exchange among its members and the dissemination of key information and data to Member States and the public in general. Furthermore, in December 2005 CASA adopted a strategic framework aimed at improving and strengthening cooperation among its members, as well as better responding to requests for assistance from Member States. Efforts are under way to carry out CASA meetings in the field with a view to raising awareness of the CASA mechanism among United Nations offices in the field and to improving the coordination of their activities related to small arms. The Secretariat continued to experience difficulties in receiving the required assistance from Member States to establish the small arms advisory service.

Recommendation 4

The Council may wish to consider means by which its interaction with the General Assembly on issues relating to small arms might be enhanced, so as to promote the further development of long-term strategies to halt the scourge of the illicit proliferation of small arms within the framework of international efforts aimed at conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and in the context of the Programme of Action adopted at the July 2001 United Nations conference on small arms.

8. In the statement by its President (S/PRST/2005/7), the Security Council welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 59/86 of 3 December 2004, by which, among other things, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue broad-based consultations on further steps to enhance international

cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons, with a view to establishing a group of governmental experts. The broad-based consultations held during the period under review showed that there was a wide recognition that international action to control brokering activities is critical to the success of the efforts to curb the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. The group of governmental experts is expected to begin its work after the United Nations conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is to be held from 26 June to 7 July 2006.

Recommendation 5

Member States should be called upon to enforce all Council resolutions on sanctions, including those imposing arms embargoes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and to bring their own national legislation into compliance with the Council's measures on sanctions. The Council may also wish to call upon all Member States to continue to make available to the appropriate United Nations bodies all pertinent information on any alleged violations of arms embargoes and to take appropriate measures to investigate such allegations.

9. By its presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/7), the Security Council called upon Member States to enforce all Council resolutions on sanctions, including those imposing arms embargoes. The Council also called upon Member States to continue to make available to the sanctions committees all pertinent information on any alleged violations of arms embargoes and to take appropriate measures to investigate such allegations.

10. During the period under review, as mentioned in my report of 26 September 2005 (S/2005/604) concerning Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has carried out numerous arms embargo inspections in Government- and rebel-held areas. An arms embargo expert has also been identified to advise UNOCI on how to improve the effectiveness of its arms embargo inspection teams. In addition, the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire appointed pursuant to resolution 1584 (2005) has conducted several investigations in Côte d'Ivoire and in neighbouring countries. In their report (S/2005/699), the experts noted with appreciation that many countries have ceased supplying military material and services to Côte d'Ivoire. The Group also noted that a number of countries have suspended or blocked the export of military goods and services to Côte d'Ivoire. The Group concluded that currently neither the Government nor the Forces nouvelles have a strategic need or the financial capability to procure heavy and light weapons.

11. By its resolution 1596 (2005), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council reaffirmed the measures imposed by resolution 1493 (2003) and also decided that, during the period of enforcement of the arms embargo, all Governments in the region, in particular those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of States bordering the district of Ituri and the Kivu Provinces, should institute civil aviation measures to ensure that the embargo was not violated. The Council demanded that all parties and all States cooperate fully with the work of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(MONUC) and of the Group of Experts created in accordance with resolution 1533 (2004), and that they ensure unhindered and immediate access for the members of the Group of Experts, in particular by supplying them with any information on possible violations of the measures taken by Member States in accordance with resolution 1596 (2005) and by facilitating their access to persons, documents and sites the Group deemed relevant to the execution of its mandate.

12. In its report submitted pursuant to resolution 1616 (2005) (S/2006/53), the Group of Experts observed that the monitoring of Congolese airspace, especially in the eastern part of the country, had scarcely changed since the Group had submitted its previous report. The Group noted that the air traffic control authority, the Régie des voies aériennes, which is responsible for air traffic services in the country, lacks air-to-ground communication equipment. The Group also noted that the current division of the airspace, whereby the airspace above Ituri is located in the flight information region of Entebbe, could become a potential source of failure to implement the measures set forth in resolution 1596 (2005). To overcome these problems, pending the rebuilding of the capacity of the Régie, the Group recommended that the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo consider designating MONUC to be responsible for air traffic services in the eastern part of the country.

13. Stressing the importance of countering the ongoing threat that Al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden and the Taliban and individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with them represent to international peace and security, the Security Council by resolution 1617 (2005) decided that all States should, inter alia, continue to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer, to those individuals, groups, undertakings and entities from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment and spare parts for the aforementioned, and technical advice, assistance, or training related to military activities. The Council also called upon the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities to provide the Council with an update of the written assessment of actions taken by Member States to implement the measures described in paragraph 1 of resolution 1617 (2005).

14. In its report (S/2005/572), the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, an independent body established by the Security Council, reported that it had analysed 140 reports submitted by States pursuant to resolution 1455 (2003) and concluded, inter alia, that most States had measures to regulate the trafficking, acquisition, storage and trade in arms, although not all had provisions to cover arms brokering. The Team noted that most reporting States indicated that they had incorporated the measures designed to prevent the acquisition of arms by Al-Qaida and the Taliban within their existing legislation, but did not provide much detailed information on enforcement measures. It also observed that States had interpreted the scope of the arms embargo in different ways, and not all had integrated it fully into their arms control measures. While no State reported any attempt to breach the arms embargo, the Team noted several situations where the effective implementation of the arms embargo was complicated by factors such as the presence of entities associated with Al-Qaida in post-conflict regions or in areas beyond government control, for example in Afghanistan and Somalia.

Recommendation 6

The Council is strongly encouraged to continue its efforts aimed at identifying the links between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources, as well as the trade in illegal drugs, and to develop innovative strategies to address this phenomenon. In this connection, careful consideration should be given to the findings and recommendations of the bodies established to investigate such links, including the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Panel of Experts on Liberia and the Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA.

15. In its report (S/2005/699), the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire highlighted the role played by the exploitation of natural resources in financing both the military expenditures of the Government and the military activities of the Forces nouvelles. In particular, the Group pointed to the lack of transparency in the income generated by the production and export of cocoa as well as from its management and distribution. The Group proposed that the Security Council should call upon the Government to commission, by May 2006, an audit of all Ivorian institutions linked to the cocoa industry, by an independent international firm. In addition, the Group suggested that the report of such an audit be transmitted to the Security Council and to the International Monetary Fund and that a summary be made public. The Group also noted the existence in the country of illegal diamond mining, for which there is no credible assessment of the volume of exports. The Group recommended that UNOCI and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme investigate together the production and the illicit export of diamonds and make public reports of their findings to prevent the corruption of the Certification Scheme, which would happen if Ivorian diamond exports entered the Kimberley Process supply chains. With regard to the Forces nouvelles, the Group noted that, in addition to using natural resources under their control to fund military activities, Forces nouvelles units extract transit dues, along the roads they control, for cocoa smuggled from Ghana and Togo.

16. In its resolution 1592 (2005), the Security Council, recalling the link between the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources in certain regions and the fuelling of armed conflicts, condemned categorically the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other sources of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and urged all States, especially those in the region, to take appropriate steps to end those illegal activities. The Council further urged all States neighbouring the Democratic Republic of the Congo to impede any kind of support to the illegal exploitation of Congolese natural resources, particularly by preventing the flow of such resources through their respective territories. Meanwhile, the Group of Experts noted in its report (S/2006/53) that in the new phase of the war for the nation's wealth methods had shifted from violence to surreptitious strategies. Local potentates, current and future warlords, militias or criminal groups usurp the economic backbone of the country by emulating traditional governance structures. Illegal groups impose authority by appointing individuals who act as quasi-governmental figureheads, but who in reality extort taxes, fees and duties. Thanks to the steady stream of revenue, these groups can entrench themselves, install a regime of fear, and commit serial violations without ever having to touch a gun. The Group called on the international community to adjust to these new realities and develop appropriate responses.

17. By its resolution 1607 (2005), the Council, recognizing the linkage between the illegal exploitation of natural resources such as diamonds and timber, the illicit trade in such resources, and the proliferation and trafficking of arms and the recruitment and use of mercenaries as one of the sources of fuelling and exacerbating conflicts in West Africa, particularly in Liberia, decided to renew the measures on diamonds imposed by resolution 1521 (2003) for a further period of six months from the date of adoption of resolution 1607 (2005). The Council also urged the National Transitional Government of Liberia to intensify its efforts, with the support of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), to establish its authority over the diamond-producing areas and to work towards establishing an official certificate-of-origin regime for trade in rough diamonds that was transparent and internationally verifiable, with a view to joining the Kimberley Process. Furthermore, the Council requested the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to resolution 1579 (2004) to conduct a follow-up assessment mission to Liberia and neighbouring States, in order to investigate and compile a report on the implementation, and any violations, of the measures imposed by resolution 1521 (2003), including the various sources of financing, such as from natural resources, for the illicit trade of arms.

18. The Panel of Experts on Liberia, in its report (S/2005/745), found that the structural reforms necessary to meet the requirements for lifting the embargo on Liberian rough diamonds had not been met. The Panel noted that the Transitional Government of Liberia lacked the institutional capacity to deal with illegal mining in remote mining areas. With regard to timber, while sanctions were found to be generally effective and no major exports were reported, the Panel noted that the Forestry Development Authority did not have the ability to manage the forests or the ability to account for all revenue and expenditures. As far as weapons were concerned, the Panel found that there had been no major discoveries of weapons and ammunition in Liberia since its previous report.

19. The Monitoring Group on Somalia, in its report (S/2005/153), noted that approximately 10,000 tons of charcoal were being illegally exported from Somalia every month with considerable revenues. The Group pointed out that large quantities of land, forest and farms were being cut and turned into charcoal, while the profits for the operation were used to mobilize militias and to purchase arms. The Monitoring Group recommended that the Transitional Federal Government or the relevant authority regulate the production of charcoal and provide guarantees for sustainable reforestation programmes, as well as adequate and legal financial channels for the reimbursement of the exportation of charcoal. The Group stressed that, unless the relevant authority regulated the production of charcoal, guaranteeing sustainable wood reforestation programmes and adequate and legal financial channels for the reimbursement of exports, businesses importing charcoal from Somalia should refrain from or reduce their engagement in this commercial activity; otherwise large sums of money proceeding from that illegal trade would continue to be used indiscriminately by the warlords in strengthening their position in the conflict.

20. The Al-Qaida and Taliban Monitoring Team, in its report (S/2005/572), noted that much of the money needed to buy arms in Afghanistan originated, in one way or another, from poppy cultivation and the burgeoning drug trade, which in itself created a market for arms. The Team also observed that the current embargo could have more effect on the Taliban if it took this into account and if all non-State actors

in Afghanistan were prevented from buying weapons, with exemptions as authorized by the Government of Afghanistan or the Security Council.

Recommendation 7

The Council is encouraged to call upon relevant parties to conflicts under its consideration to recognize the importance of activities related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in post-conflict situations, and of including such measures in the text of negotiated agreements. The Council is also urged to include in the mandate of peacekeeping operations clear provisions regarding the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, as well as specific measures for the collection and disposal of illicit and/or surplus small arms and light weapons.

21. In the statement by its President (S/PRST/2005/7), the Security Council underlined that the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be addressed together with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in post-conflict phases. At the same time, the Council recognized that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration was closely linked with long-term peace and security in a post-conflict situation and recalled that a growing number of peacekeeping missions contained the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration element as part of their mandate. The Council stressed the importance of a comprehensive international and regional approach to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration that was not limited to the political and security aspects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, but addressed also its social and economic aspects, including special needs of child soldiers and women.

22. During the reporting period, the Security Council continued to call upon the relevant parties to conflicts in the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to recognize the importance of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The Council included provisions regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and the renewed mandate of UNOCI (resolutions 1590 (2005) and 1609 (2005), respectively). Those mandates included provisions not only for the collection of weapons and ammunition but also for their destruction, as appropriate. The Council also requested that special attention be given to the specific needs of women and children.

23. In addition, the Council has been placing emphasis on the importance of inter-mission cooperation with regard to the prevention of the cross-border movement of arms and combatants, the illicit exploitation of natural resources and the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. As indicated in my report of 2 March 2005 (S/2005/135) on inter-mission cooperation and possible cross-border operations among the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), UNMIL and UNOCI, those missions have made progress towards harmonizing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the West African region.

24. With regard to the inclusion in the mandates of peacekeeping operations of clear provisions regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the resolutions adopted by the Security Council during the reporting period are summarized below.

Afghanistan

25. In its resolution 1589 (2005), the Security Council encouraged the Government of Afghanistan to continue its active efforts to accelerate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process towards its completion by June 2006, to disband the illegal armed groups and to dispose of the ammunition stockpile, and requested the international community to further extend assistance for those efforts. Furthermore, in its resolution 1623 (2005), the Council stressed the importance of full completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, of the disbandment of illegal armed groups, and of security sector reform including reconstitution of the Afghan National Army and Police. In this regard, UNICEF conducted a programme for nearly 4,000 demobilized child soldiers between the ages of 14 and 17. They are offered training sessions and reintegration options including returning to education, enrolling in vocational training or income-generating activities. Further, UNICEF-supported local demobilization and reintegration committees in 18 provinces have contributed to successful community-based programme activities, including psychosocial support for demobilized child soldiers and other war-affected and at-risk children.

Burundi

26. In its resolution 1650 (2005), the Security Council urged the Government of Burundi to complete the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, including the effective reintegration of former combatants. Meanwhile, the demobilization, reintegration and recruitment prevention project, implemented jointly by UNICEF and the Government's National Structure for Child Soldiers and financed by donors to the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme, has supported the demobilization of more than 800 children in the ranks of the armed movements and combatant militias from December 2004 to December 2005, bringing the total number of demobilized child soldiers to 3,007. UNICEF, in conjunction with 10 non-governmental organization partners, continued to implement a reintegration process, which ensured an 18-month support through family-based assistance, including back-to-school or vocational programmes; support to youth associations; primary health care, HIV/AIDS prevention and psychosocial assistance.

Côte d'Ivoire

27. By its resolution 1584 (2005), the Security Council called upon the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the Forces nouvelles, to cooperate with UNOCI in providing assistance in establishing a comprehensive list of armaments in the possession of their armed forces and paramilitary troops and militias associated with them, as well as their location, in order to help UNOCI to assist in undertaking the regrouping of all the Ivorian forces involved and in implementing the national programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants. Further, by its resolution 1603 (2005), the Council demanded that the parties fully implement the agreement on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and on the restructuring of the armed forces signed at Yamoussoukro on 14 May 2005 by the chiefs of staff of the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire and the armed forces of the Forces nouvelles, so that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process could start without delay. The Council also

demanded the immediate disarmament and dismantling of militias throughout the national territory.

28. Subsequently, by resolution 1609 (2005) the Council mandated UNOCI to assist in ensuring the security of the disarmament, cantonment and demobilization sites and to support the Government of National Reconciliation in the implementation of the national programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, paying special attention to the specific needs of women and children. UNICEF is assisting the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration as the lead agency for children associated with fighting forces. In 2005, 1,676 children received demobilization and reintegration assistance. In addition, UNICEF has sensitized 20 military chiefs of the Forces nouvelles and 42 militia chiefs in Bouaké, Man, Danané and Guiglo on not involving children in conflicts. Furthermore, the armed forces of the Forces nouvelles issued a declaration to halt the recruitment of children within their ranks and within those of allied militia groups under their control.

29. By its resolution 1633 (2005), the Security Council stressed that the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire must have all the necessary powers, among other things, to lead the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration with the support of the United Nations. The Council also considered that additional measures were required to expedite the implementation of some provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis, Accra III and Pretoria Agreements, in particular the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and requested the International Working Group to draw up as soon as possible a road map in consultation with all Ivorian parties concerning in particular the concomitant implementation of the identification process and of the cantonment of the forces, as provided for in the national programme for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation signed at Yamoussoukro on 14 May 2005. The Council further demanded that the Forces nouvelles proceed without delay with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

30. By its resolution 1592 (2005), the Security Council stressed the need to implement without delay the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for Congolese combatants, and called on the Government of National Unity and Transition to develop, with the assistance of MONUC, a joint concept of operations for the disarmament of foreign combatants. Furthermore, by its resolution 1596 (2005), the Council demanded that all parties with military capabilities in Ituri, in North Kivu or in South Kivu help the Government of National Unity and Transition to implement its commitments regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of foreign and Congolese combatants. It is estimated that 14,315 children were taken out of armed groups in 2005. UNICEF and its partners supported the exit of 9,651 of those children, of whom 80 per cent were in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and only 14 per cent were girls; and also their care while in transit camps. From among this group, 7,515 were reunited with their families and reintegrated into their communities.

Liberia

31. In its resolution 1607 (2005), the Security Council emphasized that, despite completion of demobilization and disarmament, significant challenges remained in completing the reintegration and repatriation of ex-combatants and the restructuring of the security sector, as well as establishing and maintaining stability in Liberia and the subregion.

Haiti

32. In its resolution 1608 (2005), the Security Council, welcomed the approval of a national programme on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration by the Transitional Government of Haiti, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and emphasized that its implementation was imperative for broader stabilization efforts to succeed. The Council urged the Transitional Government and MINUSTAH to begin immediately effective implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Meanwhile, UNICEF has been actively advocating for the release of children used by armed groups. In partnership with the Programme d encadrement des jeunes filles et des femmes de Carrefour Feuilles, Terre des Hommes, and others, UNICEF provided psychosocial care and supported the reintegration of more than 4,000 child victims of violence and at risk of violence in Port-au-Prince, Gonaïves and Les Cayes.

Sierra Leone

33. By its resolution 1610 (2005) concerning Sierra Leone, the Security Council encouraged the United Nations missions in the region to continue their efforts towards enhancing inter-mission cooperation, especially in the prevention of movements of arms and combatants across borders and in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. During 2005, the work of UNICEF in Sierra Leone with 2,850 children affected by war, child ex-combatants and children separated from their families has helped to provide successful reintegration for 2,647 children.

Sudan

34. In its resolution 1590 (2005), the Security Council decided that UNMIS should assist in the establishment of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme as called for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, with particular attention to the special needs of women and child combatants, and its implementation through voluntary disarmament and weapons collection and destruction. Because the term "assist" is very vague, it caused extensive debate in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly as to the extent to which the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the Sudan should be resourced from the peacekeeping assessed budget. In this regard, more detailed mandates on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration for peacekeeping operations, similar to those of UNOCI, would be most useful. UNMIS is supporting the interim disarmament, demobilization and reintegration authorities for the north and the south in a number of key assessments and surveys to facilitate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of special groups (17,000 children and 1,000 women associated with the armed forces and other armed groups, and

about 9,500 disabled ex-combatants). In southern Sudan, the authorities have decided to start releasing children associated with SPLA. While the Sudanese armed forces have yet to undertake a survey of children in their ranks, they have reiterated their commitment not to recruit children. Other armed groups continue to incorporate children. It is important that the Government of National Unity adopt legislation criminalizing child recruitment and conduct without delay a survey of children at risk.

Recommendation 8

The Council is further encouraged to consider strengthening the financing of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes through the expansion of measures covered under the budget for peacekeeping operations, thus ensuring that such activities are not entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions from Member States.

35. By its resolution 1603 (2005) concerning Côte d'Ivoire, the Security Council urged donors and international financial institutions to provide the necessary support to the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, in particular the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, through the expeditious allocation of financial resources.

36. By its resolution 1608 (2005) concerning Haiti, the Security Council urged the Transitional Government of Haiti and MINUSTAH to begin immediately effective implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, and called upon all Member States to provide timely financial, human and technical resources in support of the programme.

37. By its resolution 1607 (2005) concerning Liberia, the Security Council reiterated its call upon the international donor community to continue to provide assistance to the peace process, including for reintegration of ex-combatants and reconstruction, to contribute generously to consolidated humanitarian appeals, to disburse as soon as possible the pledges made at the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia held in New York on 5 and 6 February 2004, and to respond to the financial, administrative and technical needs of the National Transitional Government of Liberia. Furthermore, by resolution 1626 (2005) the Council called on the international community to respond to continuing needs for resources for the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants and for security sector reform.

38. In its resolution 59/296, the General Assembly noted that reinsertion activities are part of the disarmament and demobilization process, as outlined in my note (A/C.5/59/31), in which I stated, inter alia, that the Secretariat may continue to include operational costs related to disarmament and demobilization (including reinsertion) in the budgets of relevant peacekeeping missions with a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component, in accordance with mandates of the Security Council.

Recommendation 9

The Council should encourage States that have not already done so to establish the necessary legislative or other measures, including the use of authenticated end-user certificates, to ensure effective control over the export and transit of small arms and light weapons.

39. In the statement by its President (S/PRST/2005/7), the Security Council encouraged the arms-exporting countries to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in small arms and light weapons transactions according to their existing responsibilities under relevant international law. The Council also stated that the obligation of Member States to enforce the arms embargo should be coupled with enhanced international and regional cooperation concerning arms exports, and encouraged Member States to undertake vigorous actions aimed at restricting the supply of small arms, light weapons and ammunition to areas of instability.

40. In the same statement, the Security Council renewed its support to the ECOWAS plan to replace the moratorium signed in Abuja on 31 October 1998 on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons with a legally binding instrument. It also welcomed the decision by the European Council on 2 December 2004 to significantly support that initiative, and called upon all States and organizations in a position to do so to support the endeavour.

41. A major step forward in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons was the entry into force on 3 July 2005 of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/255, annex). The Firearms Protocol sets out a comprehensive system to control the movement of firearms, their parts and components, and ammunition. If implemented fully, the Protocol can be utilized to prevent trafficking in firearms regardless of the involvement of an organized criminal group.

42. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime held its second session at Vienna from 10 to 21 October 2005. The Conference decided that at its third session, to be held from 9 to 18 October 2006, it would consider, among other things, the adaptation of national legislation, the enhancement of international cooperation and the development of technical assistance to overcome difficulties in implementing the Protocol. Prior to the forthcoming session, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will send a questionnaire to all Member States on the implementation of the Firearms Protocol in the above-mentioned areas and will submit to the Conference an analytical report based on the responses received.

43. The Department for Disarmament Affairs provided support to four subregional meetings, three in Latin America and the Caribbean and one in South Asia, aimed at building common understanding regarding the issue of export, import and transit transfer controls of small arms and light weapons and promoting action at the national and subregional levels to adopt adequate transfer control measures and enhance cooperation among States in this regard.

Recommendation 10

The Council is called upon to pursue more vigorously and expeditiously the use of arms embargoes, under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to countries or regions threatened by, engaged in or emerging from armed conflict, and to promote their effective implementation. The Council is also called upon to give particular attention to the restriction of the supply of ammunition suitable for weapons already extensively available in such countries and regions.

44. Embargoes on arms and related materiel are currently in place concerning Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Al-Qaida and the Taliban, Liberia, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and the Darfur States in the Sudan. The implementation of all nine arms embargoes is overseen by sanctions committees in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, six of those committees are assisted in their oversight functions by monitoring mechanisms (see recommendation 11). The resolutions establishing arms embargoes concerning Rwanda (1011 (1995)), Sierra Leone (1171 (1998)), Al-Qaida and the Taliban (1333 (2000) and 1390 (2002)), Liberia (1521 (2003)) and Darfur (1556 (2004)) make explicit reference to ammunition, as do resolutions 1587 (2005) and 1630 (2005) concerning the arms embargo on Somalia.

45. In its report (S/2005/572), the Al-Qaida and Taliban Monitoring Team stated that the Council might wish to request all States, in particular arms-exporting countries, to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in small arms and light weapons transactions to prevent illegal diversion and re-export of arms and related materiel, in violation of the measures contained in the resolutions relating to Al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Recommendation 11

The Council may wish to consider coercive measures against Member States that deliberately violate arms embargoes declared in respect of specific conflict areas. In this regard, the Council is encouraged to establish monitoring mechanisms, under each relevant Council resolution, to oversee their rigorous and comprehensive enforcement.

46. The Monitoring Group on Somalia, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team on Al-Qaida and the Taliban, the Panel of Experts on Liberia, the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire and the Panel of Experts on the Sudan have all been established or renewed in 2005. These expert monitoring mechanisms assist the respective sanctions committees with monitoring and assessing the implementation of sanctions, as well as with providing technical advice.

47. In its resolutions 1584 (2005) and 1609 (2005), the Security Council requested UNOCI to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo measures concerning Côte d'Ivoire imposed by resolution 1572 (2004), in cooperation with the Group of Experts established under resolution 1584 (2005) and, as appropriate, with UNMIL, UNAMSIL and the Governments concerned, including by inspecting, as they deemed necessary and without notice, the cargo of aircraft and of any transport vehicle using the ports, airports, airfields, military bases and border crossings of Côte d'Ivoire. The Council further requested UNOCI to collect, as appropriate, arms

and any related materiel brought into Côte d'Ivoire in violation of the arms embargo measures, and to dispose of such arms and related materiel as appropriate. Furthermore, by its resolution 1633 (2005) the Council reaffirmed its readiness to impose sanctions against any person who blocked the implementation of the peace process, who was determined as responsible for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Côte d'Ivoire, who incited publicly hatred and violence, or against any person or entity determined to be in violation of the arms embargo.

48. In its resolution 1596 (2005), the Security Council requested MONUC, within its existing capabilities and without prejudice to the performance of its current mandate, to continue to focus its activities aimed at monitoring the arms embargo in North and South Kivu and in Ituri.

49. In its resolution 1607 (2005), the Security Council called upon UNMIL, UNAMSIL and UNOCI to intensify their cooperation, within their capabilities and areas of deployment and without prejudice to their mandates, to monitor arms trafficking and recruitment of mercenaries within the subregion.

50. In its resolutions 1587 (2005) and 1630 (2005), the Security Council requested the Monitoring Group on Somalia to continue investigating the implementation of the arms embargo by Member States and its violations, inter alia, through field-based investigations in Somalia, where possible, and, as appropriate, in other States, in particular those in the region; to assess actions taken by Somali authorities, as well as Member States, in particular those in the region, to fully implement the arms embargo; to make specific recommendations based on detailed information in relevant areas of expertise related to violations and measures to give effect to and strengthen the implementation of the arms embargo in its various aspects; to continue refining and updating information on the draft list of those individuals and entities who violated the measures implemented by Member States in accordance with resolution 733 (1992), inside and outside Somalia, and their active supporters, for possible future measures by the Council, and to present such information to the Sanctions Committee on Somalia.

51. In its report (S/2005/572), the Al-Qaida and Taliban Monitoring Team stated that in order for the arms embargo to remain an essential part of an effective and concerted international response to the Al-Qaida and Taliban threat, it should be developed to widen its scope and increase its enforcement.

Recommendation 12

Member States should be called upon to enhance transparency in armaments, including through universal and consistent participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, and to take other confidence-building measures in defence and security matters.

52. The Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire mentioned in its report (S/2005/699) that, given the high level of defence expenditure of Côte d'Ivoire, the Security Council should call upon that Government to submit as a matter of urgency a comprehensive breakdown of that expenditure for 2005 to the United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures.

53. During the reporting period, the Department for Disarmament Affairs continued to undertake a number of activities aimed at enhancing the awareness of Member States of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures and at encouraging greater participation. Presentations were made to the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States on the two transparency instruments, and a regional workshop was organized for States parties to the Nairobi Declaration and the Southern African Development Community Protocol. In addition, the Department continued to implement its project on the Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime in Africa. Through its Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Department organized a Defence White Book Workshop for MERCOSUR and associated States with a view to strengthening democratic values, practices and human security through the creation of structured defence views, aims and policies.

54. In May 2005, the Department for Disarmament Affairs published a booklet containing technical guidelines to assist Member States in the preparation of their submissions on military expenditures in accordance with the United Nations reporting matrix. In addition, the Department assisted in the preparation and finalization of the report by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on a common methodology for measuring military expenditures, as part of a project on governance and security sector reform in Latin America and the Caribbean, coordinated by the Department of Political Affairs.

55. As a result of the continued efforts of the Department for Disarmament Affairs to encourage greater participation in the two United Nations reporting instruments, the level of participation by Member States remains relatively high. For the Register, the average participation has remained at around 115 for the past five years, compared to less than 100 in the 1990s. For the Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, submissions were consistently received from around 75 States in the past five years, up from fewer than 30 in the preceding years. To date, 169 States have reported at least once to the Register and 120 to the Instrument. Some Member States have not been participating consistently, however, and some have never participated in either of the two instruments, so that universal participation — which is the declared objective of both instruments — has not yet been achieved. The Register, whose scope was expanded recently to include man-portable air defence systems, remains one of the most important confidence-building measures of the United Nations.

56. By its resolution 60/226, the General Assembly requested me to establish a group of governmental experts to assist in preparing a report on the continuing operation and further development of the Register, to be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-first session. The Group, which will meet in three one-week sessions, will hold its first session in New York from 27 February to 3 March 2006.

III. Observations and conclusions

57. I am pleased to note the progress achieved in the implementation of recommendation 1, which has resulted in the adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Its effectiveness and relevance will depend

on the commitment of Member States to fully implement it. With regard to recommendation 2, on the Interpol Weapons Electronic Tracing System, I am pleased to note its enhancement and I look forward to a closer cooperation between the United Nations and Interpol in the implementation of the International Instrument mentioned under recommendation 1.

58. Regarding recommendation 3, the Security Council should call upon Member States to provide support to the CASA mechanism in order to enhance its effectiveness as a platform for the development of a coordinated and coherent United Nations approach to the problem of small arms and light weapons and its relevance as a provider of services to Member States. Concerning recommendation 4, the interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly would contribute to developing a coherent and comprehensive United Nations policy on small arms and light weapons. This is particularly important in the light of the forthcoming conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

59. Concerning the implementation of recommendation 5, the enforcement of Security Council resolutions on sanctions will depend on the political will and relevant technical capacity of Member States.

60. On recommendation 6, I am pleased to note the continuing attention paid by the Security Council to links between the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to developing strategies to address the issue. I encourage the pursuit of concrete actions, such as the independent audit proposed by the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire.

61. With regard to recommendation 7, on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, I am pleased to note the emphasis placed by the Security Council on the importance of inter-mission cooperation in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Also, detailed provisions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, such as those included in the mandate of UNOCI, are particularly useful and should become more frequent. In this regard, I would like to recommend that the Council explicitly articulate, in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, the role of peacekeeping missions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Concerning recommendation 8, on the financing for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, I am pleased that the General Assembly has noted that reinsertion activities are part of the disarmament and demobilization process and that operational costs related to disarmament and demobilization, including reinsertion, may continue to be included in the budgets of relevant peacekeeping operations. The success of disarmament and demobilization programmes hinges largely on the provision of such transitional assistance to cover the basic needs of former combatants and their families.

62. Regarding the implementation of recommendation 9, on control over the export and transit of small arms and light weapons, it is encouraging to note several ongoing initiatives in the area of control over the export, import and transit of small arms and light weapons. The Security Council should encourage States to enhance their cooperation in this area. It should also encourage States that have not yet done so to accede to the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

63. Concerning recommendations 10, on a more vigorous and expeditious use of arms embargoes, and 11, on coercive measures against those who deliberately violate arms embargoes, I am satisfied with the continued practice of establishing, under the relevant Security Council resolutions, mechanisms to support, monitor and assess the implementation of sanctions as well as to provide technical advice to the related sanctions committees, with a view to ensuring full compliance with the embargoes.

64. With regard to recommendation 12, I note with great satisfaction the growing participation of Member States in the two United Nations reporting instruments on armaments. I encourage Member States to continue to lend their support to efforts to promote both instruments so as to achieve universal participation. Following the inclusion of man-portable air defence systems in the Register, I hope that in the near future the Register will also be expanded to include international transfers of small arms and light weapons.

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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 17 February 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I wish to draw your attention to the statement made by the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization on 16 February 2006. The meeting, which was headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, considered many important matters concerning issues on the national and international agenda of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority. Among the issues discussed, the Committee condemned the plans by the Government of Israel to isolate Al-Aghwar (the Jordan Valley) area from the rest of the West Bank and highlighted the dangerous implications such a plan has for the achievement of peace in the region.

In this regard, Israel, the occupying Power, has instituted a regime of permits and severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley. It seems apparent that Israel is attempting to annex this area by creating a situation in the Jordan Valley almost identical to that of the "seam zone" between the unlawful wall being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and the Green Line. In fact, this week, Israel, the occupying Power, has begun in earnest the construction of the "eastern wall" in the Jordan Valley which will completely enclose the West Bank within a de facto open-air prison.

The severe restrictions of movement imposed by the occupying Power prohibit some 2 million Palestinian residents of the West Bank from entering the Jordan Valley area, which constitutes around one third of the total area of the West Bank. This has resulted in the disenfranchisement and the disappearance of Palestinians from the Valley, with the exception of a few thousand who live there. Moreover, thousands of the Palestinian residents of the neighbouring towns and villages in the northern West Bank, some only a few kilometres away, are absent from the Valley, even though their families and friends reside there. Even more tragic, Palestinians who have farmland in the Valley or are employed in agriculture in the area have been robbed of their only means of livelihood.

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In this regard, the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization stated that such expansionist designs by Israel, including the continuation of settlement expansion in Occupied East Jerusalem and the building of its wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, are destroying any chance to achieve a just and permanent peace in the Middle East. The Committee further went on to state that "the Israeli plan transforms Palestinian land into isolated cantons, preventing the establishment of an independent Palestinian State". The Committee urged the Quartet, the authors of the "road map to peace", to assume its responsibilities towards the peace process and compel Israel to cease its expansion into the Jordan Valley, as well as all other actions working against the achievement of peace on the basis of the two-State solution.

It is also important to highlight that during the same meeting, the Executive Committee welcomed the free and fair elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council and congratulated the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, for their commitment to democracy. The Committee further indicated that the election results do not represent a departure from the positions and agreements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority. This includes international and various Arab summit resolutions, the provisions of international law, international conventions, United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and the political programme set out by the Palestine Liberation Organization, which includes the road map, the Arab initiative adopted in Beirut in 2002 and all the agreements signed with Israel. As such, in his statement before the first meeting of the new Palestinian Legislative Council, President Abbas is expected to underline the above-mentioned elements and state his expectation that all agreements will be fully respected and honoured by the new Cabinet.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations